

Endophthalmitis

A sight-threatening emergency

Endophthalmitis is a serious and painful infection of the inside of the eye, including the vitreous humour and retina.

It is an emergency, like septicaemia, and requires immediate medical treatment to prevent permanent vision loss.

Symptoms

Common signs to watch for

Severe, deep eye pain.

Redness in the eye.

Decreased vision.

Swollen eyelids and discharge from the eye.

It commonly occurs after any surgery of the eye or any injury to the eye. It can occasionally occur after a severe infection like septicaemia, or after any infection elsewhere in the body — especially in immunocompromised patients.

Causes

How the infection reaches the eye

Exogenous (most common): Germs enter the eye from the outside during eye surgery, eye injections, or a physical eye injury or puncture wound.

Endogenous: Germs spread through the bloodstream from an infection in another part of the body, such as a urinary tract infection, pneumonia, or skin abscess.

Treatment

Fighting the infection and saving the eye

Intravitreal injections: Antibiotics or antifungal medicines are injected directly into the vitreous cavity of the eye.

Along with this, systemic antibiotics (oral or intravenous), local antibiotic-steroid drops, and oral steroids are given in bacterial infections.

Eye fluid — aqueous or vitreous — is usually taken out and sent for microbiological analysis.

Surgery: A procedure called vitrectomy may be needed to remove infected fluid from inside the eye.

Outcome

Outcome is usually good if treated in time, but depends on the virulence and severity of the infection.